

LETTERS
TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF
NORTHUMBERLAND

AND ITS
NEIGHBOURHOOD,

*On Subjects interesting to the AUTHOR,
and to THEM.*

PART II.

BY JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, L. L. D. F. R. S. &c.

Nunquamne reponam?
Juvenal.

NORTHUMBERLAND:

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BY JOSEPH PRINCE, F.R.S.

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TO THE
INHABITANTS OF NORTHUMBERLAND
AND ITS
NEIGHBOURHOOD.

LETTER VIII.

*Of the Innocence and Advantage of the free Discussion of
all political Subjects*

My Friends and Neighbours,

HAVING promised you a full confession of all my political crimes and misdemeanors, and having in the preceding Letters made a faithful declaration concerning what *I am*, and what I have *done* among you, I proceed to give you some of my *thoughts*; and tho' you might, in some measure, have guessed at them thro' the medium of my actions, I will save you that trouble, and tell you more of my thoughts than any knowledge you have of my actions could possibly have enabled the most sagacious of you to discover. But in order to do this fairly and honestly, you must excuse me if, after speaking of my own faults, I touch a little upon yours, tho' I shall do this with as gentle a hand as possible.

You must, however, consider, that tho' I may point out what appears to me to be a fault, you will, of course, be the judges in your own cause, and acknowledge

knowledge it or not as you may see reason ; and also that it is not in my power, but altogether in yours, to find the proper remedy. As a sensible Pope said to some Englishmen who were introduced to him, when he unexpectedly gave them his benediction in the usual form at parting, " The blessing of an old man can do you " no harm ;" so the advice of an old man, as I am, however improper, or impertinent, cannot hurt you. My trouble in writing is not much, and yours in reading is still less.

Presuming, as I hope I may, that, after the apology I have made for writing these Letters, you will not think it impertinent in me, tho' an *alien*, to give you my thoughts on any subject relating to the conduct of public affairs (in which I am as much interested as any of you can be) I shall take the liberty to request more of your attention to some particular articles, than you seem to me to have given to them. I may also plead that this is the only way in which I can contribute to the redress of any grievance of which I may think I see cause to complain. For, being an alien, I am neither eligible to any office of trust myself, nor have I a vote for any candidate. But the lowest servant in a family, if he thinks that any thing is going wrong, may speak of it to any of his fellow servants, even to the steward, or to the master himself, whether they will attend to him or not.

Nothing, however, is more common with the friends of the administration in all countries than to consider every censure of *public measures* as an attack upon the *government* of the country, and every censure of the government as a thing hostile to the *people*. But it is without any good reason in either of the cases. Will it be pretended that all magistrates, and all ministers of state, are infallible, or impeccable? If not, they may mistake the interest of the country, or consult their own interest at its expence. May not, then, a person who
thinks

thinks them to be either mistaken, or dishonest, and that the people at large are in danger of being injured by their conduct, point it out to his countrymen. Nay, is it not the absolute duty of every honest man to give to others the information that he has acquired himself. According to the principles of your constitution, all persons entrusted with the conduct of public affairs, how high soever you have placed them, are but your *servants*, and accountable to you for their conduct in office.

Farther, if any person should conceive that any thing in the very constitution of the government itself might be changed for the better, is he an enemy to the *people* for proposing it? It is only giving his opinion concerning what he imagines will be for their good. Tho' he be mistaken, his intention may be the best in the world, and therefore he will be entitled to their thanks.

If I were to advise you to change the whole form of your government, from a republic to an absolute monarchy, I should do you no harm, since you would be at liberty to receive or reject the proposal as you thought proper. I might say that a President like yours would make a poor appearance in the presence of a king, that kingly government has both more *dignity* and more *energy* than yours; that such a man as the late king of Prussia, or Peter the Great of Russia, would presently rid you of all traitorous and seditious persons, without troubling your courts of justice with them, which would be a great saving of expence; that such a government would keep all the country perfectly quiet; that then the lower orders of the people, having nothing to do with politics, would attend to their proper business, of agriculture, manufactures, or commerce, without distraction, and their affairs would prosper in proportion; and that those of the higher orders, the more opulent, not being obliged to give any part of their time to the study of the theory of government, would have more leisure

sure to attend to the improvement of the polite arts and science, to the glory of the monarch in the first place, and their own reputation in the second.

But if, notwithstanding all that I could urge in favour of such a government, you should prefer what you call *liberty*, in which persons of all ranks, qualified or unqualified, give the greatest part of their time to a subject which they will never understand, and still chuse to clamour, and almost fight, about endless elections of magistrates, no harm would be done. You might proceed just as you had done before.

If, in order to prevent the mischief that often arises from *competition*, I should advise that, instead of making a king of any native American, who would not soon acquire the proper disposition and habits of one, you should return to your former allegiance to the king of Great Britain, a king ready formed to your hands, who would, no doubt, forgive all that was past, and promise you the best treatment for the future, and thus become a wing of that great empire which now commands the world, and share in the honour of exterminating all Jacobinism, democracy, anarchy, and irreligion (all which are now only considered as different names of the same thing) and you should not quite like the proposal, I should still hope to be excused for making it, from my loyalty to my natural sovereign, and my zeal for the honour of my native country, even if I did not consult your interest in it; and as you would not be hurt, you could not be much offended.

Mr. Cobbet, a greater admirer of England than I am, would, no doubt, go farther than I could in its commendation. He might say that, could you but see the king of Great Britain in his state coach, drawn by eight cream coloured horses, with all his horse guards, surrounded by perhaps a hundred thousand admiring spectators, in his progress thro' St. James's park; and after that see him seated in his robes on the throne in the house of
 Lords,

Lords, with all the Lords and Bishops in their robes ; could you see him served on the knee, and persons kissing his hand, you would be ashamed of your President, and every thing belonging to him. He might say that an American would be struck dumb at the sight of an English judge seated in his scarlet robe on the bench, with all the lawyers in their gowns, and flowing wigs. He would say that the best man among you was hardly fit to be made a justice of the peace in England. And then what is your *navy* ? It is not so much as the *frog* compared to the *ox* in the fable ; and might bid you take care lest the ox should set his foot upon it.

But should you consider all this as mere prejudice in favour of our native country, and think there was more shew than substance in kingly governments, that armies and navies cost more than they are worth, and that you could employ your funds to more advantage, you would only smile at our representations, and not be angry.

To be perfectly serious : in all countries, and under every form of government, *opinions* of every kind, and those of all persons, natives or aliens, in office or out of office, should be perfectly free ; because they can do no harm ; tho' *overt acts*, tending to the forcible subversion of any government, should be watched with the greatest care.

A person may even be safely trusted with the administration of the affairs of a country the constitution of whose government he does not approve. Admitting, for instance, what is commonly supposed, and is not altogether improbable, that Mr. Adams, the President, should think an *hereditary monarchy* preferable to an *elected Executive*, like that of this country ; being of opinion that such a form of government is more favourable to the peace and happiness of the people ; yet, yielding, as every man must do, to the opinion of the majority of his fellow citizens, and dreading, as all wise men

men will, the hazard of any great change, or revolution, in the government, he may faithfully administer that which he has sworn to maintain; and I have no doubt but that, whatever may be his private opinion on the subject, he will do it to the best of his ability.

All that we have to apprehend in such a case is from the opinions of persons in high offices becoming general; and it is, doubtless, much in their power to recommend their opinions to general acceptance. But even then, if the people at large really approve of the change proposed, he will be entitled to their gratitude for bringing it about. Nothing is to be dreaded but *violence*, which we need not fear will ever be attempted in this country. Let every thing, especially things of importance, be proposed to free discussion, and let *truth* and *error* have equal advantage. The former cannot fail to recommend itself to universal acceptance in due time, and the latter will be universally exploded.

I am, &c.

LETTER IX.

Of Improvements in the Constitution of the United States.

My Friends and Neighbours,

MY object in this Letter is not to criticize the whole of your constitution, or to dwell on the general excellence of it. I think it the best that has ever been devised by man, and reduced to practice, in any age, or in any part, of the world. It has every thing that is valuable in the English constitution, which

was

was confessedly superior to any other in Europe, without its defects. Without this persuasion I should not have come among you. But no work of man can be expected to be perfect; and therefore you will not, I hope, be offended if I mention two or three particulars, with respect to which I think it might be improved. Of this, however, you will judge for yourselves. The mere opinion of any person, and especially that of an alien, cannot do you any harm.

1. If, then, I may take the liberty to censure any article in your constitution, the first that I should notice would be that which allows of the eligibility of any man to the office of President for life. History abundantly shews that the love of power is as great as that of money. The more men have of either, the more they generally wish to have: It being possible, then, by your constitution, for a man to keep this high situation for life, by being elected into it every four years, he has an interest in enlarging the power attached to it; and if ambition be his object (and pure patriotism, I fear, exists only in Utopia) he will use every means that his situation gives him, which will necessarily be great, to gain friends; especially by giving offices of trust and emolument under him, not to those who are the best qualified to discharge the duties of them, but to those who will second his views of continuing in power. And they who are thus favoured by him will naturally concur in promoting his interest, because it will lay him under an additional obligation to promote theirs.

On the contrary, if the constitution was such as that no person could enjoy an office of such power as that of the President longer than three or four years, and he was not eligible to it again, or not till after a considerable distance of time, it would not be his interest to make friends at the expence of his country, and he would not wish to enlarge a power to which he must himself soon be, and remain, subject.

Whatever may be objected to the constitution of France in other respects, in this it is preferable to that of this country. Since each of the five directors, besides having only one fifth part of the power of your President, must be reduced to the rank of a common citizen in five years, the temptation he is under to extend his power is much less. This advantage, however, is probably more than balanced by the want of union, and consequently of energy, in such a divided executive.

It will be said that the longer any person in the executive offices of government continues in power, the more stable and uniform the measures of government will be; whereas frequent changes will be attended with endless fluctuations, so that foreign powers will never know what to look to.

But this Inconvenience, for such it is acknowledged to be, only takes place when the person possessed of this power has no will but his own to follow, as in governments that are arbitrary, like that of Russia. This empire has seldom changed its head without a total change of its politics. Peter III found his country at war with the king of Prussia, and instantly became his ally. This alliance the empress, who soon succeeded him, changed into a state of neutrality, and if she had pleased, it might have been hostility again.

What can be more changeable than the measures of the same arbitrary court, directed by the caprices of different courtiers and favourites. Dumouriez says that those of the court of Versailles, in his time, varied with every change of ministers, of factions, of mistresses, or of favourites. See his *Life*, vol. 2, p. 85.

But the leaders of a government truly republican, like that of the United States, will, and must, take their measures from the wishes of the people, which are not so apt to change, because they flow from the general interest. The annual change of the Roman consuls never occasioned any change in the measures of government,

vernment, nor did the annual election of Doges at Venice or Genoa.

It will also be said that if the people really prefer any particular President to any other, they ought to be gratified, and not be under a necessity of changing him. But in a country of such an extent as that of the United States of America, there must, surely, be more than one person whom the people will think sufficiently qualified to serve them, and in whom they can safely place confidence: and this small restriction of their choice will be abundantly compensated by putting it out of the power, or inclination, of any President to consult his own interest at the expence of theirs.

If you read any history, you will find that an attachment to particular persons has been the occasion of unspeakable mischief in all countries. Tho' some inconvenience arose from the Romans having annual consuls, and annual generals, it was found to be trifling compared with those which were the consequence of the attachment the soldiers acquired for such men as Marius and Sylla, Cæsar and Pompey, who were suffered to continue many years in the command of the same armies. It was the true cause of that succession of dreadful civil wars, which did not end but with the total subversion of the republican form of government, and the establishment of one that was purely military and despotic.

2. So excellent a constitution as is that of this country deserves to be guarded with the greatest care; and yet in this respect it appears to me to be defective, as it contains no sufficient provision for guarding against violations of it by persons entrusted with its administration. To decide in questions of this high and serious nature, there should, I think, be a *special court*, consisting of deputies from all the states of the union.

The greatest danger of any encroachment on the constitution is from the congress mistaking or exceeding their

their power ; and by proceeding without any check of this kind, they might gradually assume all the power of the English parliament, which is uncontrouled by any defined constitution. And certainly no body of men should be judges in their own cause.

The ordinary judges, tho' continuing in office during their good behaviour, and not removeable at any person's pleasure, are so connected with persons in power, and especially those from whom they received their appointments, that they have been found, with very few exceptions, to favour the existing administration in all countries, and in all times.

I would also take the liberty to propose that it should be in the power of the legislature of any of the separate states to call this special court, and lay before it whatever they should apprehend to have been a violation of the constitution, by the Congress, the President, or any man, or body of men, whatever.

3. If I might take the liberty to censure not only your government, but that of every other in the world, it would be your requiring *oaths of allegiance*, and indeed any declaration of a man's principles or sentiments, in words or writing. Besides being an abuse of religion, and a temptation to prevaricate, I do not believe that this measure has ever been found to answer the end proposed by it. On one pretence or other, and especially that of persons being compelled to take them, thro' the impossibility of avoiding them, it will be maintained by many, that they are of no force or obligation ; and in many countries oaths of allegiance have been changed to others inconsistent with them, and yet not objected to on that account. Witness those that have been taken in France to the different constitutions of that country since the abolition of monarchy.

A few conscientious persons, who wish to be quiet, and who might be safely trusted in any government, will scruple to take such oaths ; and by this means good
subjects

subjects are excluded, while men of no principle, such as alone are dangerous, will make no difficulty of taking any oath that you chuse to impose.

It might, surely, be sufficient to punish persons residing in any country when they are found to act contrary to the laws of it. For my own part, I prefer the situation of an alien, inconvenient as it is in several respects, rather than make the harsh declaration which your laws require respecting the country of which I am a native; but while my person and my property are in your power, have you not sufficient hold upon me, without requiring any verbal declaration about *renouncing England*, and of my attachment to America?

It may be prudent not to admit strangers to offices of trust and power till after a competent time of residence; so that it may be presumed that they have acquired a sufficient knowledge of your laws and constitution, and a proper attachment to them. But the declaration of this by an oath appears to me to be superfluous, to be a cause of distress to the conscientious, and no bar whatever to those whom you would wish to keep out of the country.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER X.

Of Infringements of the Constitution by the Acts of Congress respecting the Regulation of Commerce, the Power of making Peace and War, and Restrictions of the Freedom of Speech and of the Press.

My Friends and Neighbours,

WHEN I left England, I was induced to come hither chiefly on account of my high admiration of the constitution of your government. It was at that time the only one that had been drawn up with deliberation by persons appointed for that express purpose, and solemnly accepted by the nation. It was wholly founded on the *rights of man*, and the *sovereignty of the people*. In other words it was purely *republican*, every officer being chosen by the people, to serve them for a limited time, and afterwards accountable to them for their conduct. There were no hereditary honours, or powers of any kind, and no form of religion established by law. The power of making peace or war, and also that of regulating commerce with foreign nations, as well as among yourselves, was wisely placed in the Congress, of which your immediate representatives (who are the most interested in every thing of this kind) are the most essential part. Your country was then open to all new comers without any restriction; and that great and necessary guard of liberty the *freedom of speech and of the press*, was uncontrolled. Your constitution expressly says that "the migration of such persons as any state then existing should think proper to admit should not be prohibited by Congress till the year 1808; and that the Congress should make

"no

"no law abridging the freedom of speech or of the
"press."

To my great surprize and mortification, however, I now find that several of these articles, essential to a truly free government, have been, in my opinion, on one pretence or other, infringed. Or, if the present state of things be really agreeable to the Constitution, it was not drawn up for the use of plain men, but of very acute lawyers only. Certainly the comment does not naturally flow from the text; or there was in the letter of the constitution a latent ambiguity, which defeats the professed object of it. Thus because your Constitution gives to the President, and two thirds of the Senate, the power of making *treaties* with foreign powers, and treaties may relate to any subject in which different states may be concerned, they may make *treaties of alliance, offensive and defensive*, and also *treaties of commerce*; and by this means all interference of the proper representatives of the people either in the business of *commerce*, or of *peace and war*, in which they are most concerned, and in which they therefore ought in reason to have the most control, is effectually precluded. The treaty, shackling their commerce, or involving them in a war, is actually made independently of them, and all their objections to it have no effect.

Since treaties become parts of the law, by which the courts of justice are bound, I do not see but that it is in the power of the President and two thirds of the senate, that is I believe of twenty one men, to bind the country *in all cases whatever*. For what is there that may not be introduced into some treaty? In this way this country might have become a party in the treaty of Pilnitz or of Pavia, and thus have been engaged, tho' ever so reluctantly, in the coalition against the liberties of France, and of Europe in general.

It is, moreover, contended by *the friends*, as they are called, of government, that when, in consequence
of

of any treaty, money is to be raised to carry it into effect, the representatives of the nation, who give the money, must absolutely raise the sum required; or as the phrase is, *make the appropriations*; having no other choice than that of raising it in what they may think the best manner.

This is a power which even the parliament of Great Britain has not yet been brought to surrender. There the king has, indeed, the nominal power of making peace and war, and also treaties of every kind. But if money be necessary to carry them into execution, the treaties come under discussion in the House of Commons, and the people give or withhold their money as they think proper; so that they have a virtual negative on all the measures of the court; and certainly it is highly reasonable that they should have it. And was not this intended by the framers of your constitution too? Could they give the Congress the power of making peace and war, and also that of regulating commerce in one part of that instrument, and take it out of their hands in another. Such manifest inconsistency and deceit is not to be supposed.

It, therefore, appears most clearly to me, who am a stranger among you, that the real meaning and intent of the constitution in these two essential articles has been perverted, that a most important power has been taken from the many, and transferred to the few, and that the most valuable interests of the former have been surrendered to the latter. If in this I reason wrong, I wish to be set right. But I presume that your *constitution* was drawn up for the use of the citizens at large, and in such language as it was thought they might understand; and this language being English, I may be supposed to understand it as well as yourselves. Your constitution is not like that of the English government, to be looked for in remote history, or collected from the actual exercise of it, like the principles of the com-

mon law. It is committed to *writing*, and was made in the memory of persons now living; so that the real meaning of every article of it, and the reasons on which they were founded, are well known.

So evident is it, in my opinion, that the *alien and sedition acts* are unconstitutional, that I shall not enlarge on the proof of this. It is sufficient, I think, to observe with respect to them, that the Congress have made laws (if unconstitutional acts can be called *laws*) on subjects with respect to which they were expressly forbidden by the constitution to make any. I shall, therefore, content myself with making some observations on the nature and tendency of them.

Laws calculated to restrain the freedom of speech and of the press, which have always been made on the pretense of the *abuse* of them, are of so suspicious a nature in themselves, and have been so constantly the resort of arbitrary governments, that I was beyond measure astonished to find them introduced here; and yet in some respects the laws that have lately been made by Congress are more severe than those in England.

While the press is open to the friends, as well as the enemies, of those in power, I see no good reason why they should not be content to defend themselves with the same weapons with which they are attacked. Why should any man shelter himself behind *penal laws* when he is attacked by *argument*, if it was in his power to defend himself in the same way. Argument answers the purpose so much more effectually than *force*, that it is reasonable to conclude, that recourse will never be had to the latter, but when there is a failure of the former. Why do we use a rod to children, but because they are incapable of hearing reason? In no country will there ever be wanting men sufficiently able, and willing, to defend the conduct of the governing powers. To this standard men of genius are rea-

dy enough to run, from motives that do not need to be pointed out.

All mere *opinions* concerning the conduct of persons in public offices ought to be as free as any other opinions concerning subjects that are interesting to the community. In fact, it is no more than masters censuring the conduct of their servants. For every individual is a part of the great mass, for the use of whom all governments were instituted. But persons in *office*, which necessarily implies *servitude*, being usually called *governors*, are apt to arrogate to themselves the prerogatives of *masters*; and their friends and flatterers call almost every censure on their conduct, every thing that has in it more of freedom than they like, in speaking or writing, *sedition* or *treason*: whereas, in reason, nothing ought to be so termed, that does not immediately affect the peace of the country.

The characters, or the lives, of persons in office, by whatever names they may be called, ought not to be considered in any other light than those of other individuals, under the protection of the same laws. An attempt to take the life of a king would never have been considered as *high treason* in Europe, if kings had not been considered in a different light from that of the servants of the Public. Not but that the lives of all public officers, civil or military, even that of a constable, being of great importance to the society, the crime of taking them away is greater than that of the murder of private persons; but still it is a different thing from that of high treason. But tho' it may be proper to guard the *lives* of public officers by severe penal laws, there is no necessity for such a defence of their *characters*, or *public conduct*; because they may be defended by the same means by which they are attacked. When a life is taken the mischief is without remedy, but any injury done to a character may be repaired.

Governors

Governors vainly endeavour to ward off impending evils by imposing silence on their adversaries. History shews that no government ever derived any permanent advantage from measures of this kind. The less men have the liberty to *speak*, the more they will *think*; and they naturally suspect that what they are forbidden to examine will not bear examination.

In no country was there ever less liberty of printing and publishing than in France before the revolution. When I was at Paris, in 1774, the translator of the first volume of my *Experiments on Air* could not obtain leave to publish the whole of my Preface, which contained some free sentiments concerning the general extension of knowledge. The inspector of the press desired a friend to inform me, that he had not himself any objection to the publication; but that the nature of his office was such, that it would be too hazardous for him to admit of it.

But did this strictness prevent the revolution? The freest publications were at the same time circulated with the greatest industry, and they were read with avidity, and with tenfold effect, in consequence of it. The same will be the case in every other country in which the same measures shall be adopted; so that without pretending to any extraordinary means of prying into futurity, we may predict, that the cause of *monarchy* in England, and that of *federalism* in this country, will be no gainers eventually by what their advocates are doing in this way.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

*Of the Laws relating to Aliens, and the Naturalization of Foreigners.**My Friends and Neighbours,*

ALL the laws respecting *Aliens*, and those that are calculated to throw difficulties in the way of *naturalization*, have been made since my arrival in the country, and I am far from seeing the wisdom of them. Little did I then expect that, tho' I continued an alien, I should not have the right of a *trial by jury*, which your constitution expressly gives to *all persons* without exception, if I should be accused of any crime; whereas I now find that, not only without the benefit of a jury, but that even without a *trial*, or indeed any formal *accusation*, your President may, of his own suspicion only, send me out of the country. And in this case perfect innocence is no security; since the best of men are liable to prejudice, and open to false information.

It is not denied that those laws were intended to exclude from this country the friends of liberty, opprobriously called *Jacobins, Democrats, &c.* emigrating from Europe, a description of men in which I am proud to rank myself. But consider the matter calmly, and say whether you can think the object worth securing by this means. What does this country, I do not say the *governors* of it, but what does *the country*, what do *yourselves*, gain by it. You certainly do not now want people from Europe. Your population increases fast enough without this additional source; but you want the *money* of Europeans, to clear your country, and cultivate

vate your lands, and you cannot expect the money without the *men*.

Had those laws been made six years ago, there would not have been an Englishman in this place; but tho' the makers and friends of the laws would not have been sorry for this, can *you* say the same? Have the proprietors of lands and houses, have your artizans, and your labouring poor, derived no advantage from our residence among you? Have you not been benefited by the purchases we have made, and the punctuality of our payments; and what is perhaps more than this, by the example of our activity and industry, which are habitual to Englishmen?

You see, besides, that the dread of our *politics*, which has been the cause of all these harsh laws, is altogether chimerical. For the English of this place are not more agreed on this subject than you are yourselves. Several of us are as good federalists as any of you, and none of us more violently democratical than others of you. And the generality are men who quietly mind their business, without giving themselves, or you, any trouble on the subject. Very far should I have been from writing these expostulatory letters on the subject of Politics, if I could have been suffered as quietly to follow the business of my library and my laboratory, as they do that of their several professions. But to be held out as I have been for several years as a dangerous person, on whom it behoves the governors of the country to keep a watchful eye, and perhaps to have been in a great measure the cause of the prevailing jealousy of foreigners, and of the laws that are calculated to exclude them, has at length, tho' with much reluctance, led me to endeavour to undeceive you. If I succeed it will be to your advantage as well as mine. If not, things will only remain as they were before.

Admitting

Admitting the object of our adversaries to be a proper one, I do not see that they gain any advantage by rendering naturalization difficult. It is not a man's being kept by force in the state of an alien that will dispose him to think better of any country; nor, if his disposition be hostile to it, and he be chagrined by this suspicion of him, will it be at all the less in his power to do the mischief that is apprehended from him. His being an alien does not prevent his speaking or writing; and by the use of his tongue, and his pen, he has all the influence that his talents and activity can give him. All that you take from him is his capacity for enjoying any civil office, which a stranger, tho' naturalized, would not soon expect; and his single vote for any other person to gain it is of trifling consequence among many thousands.

If the gross abuse from which I have never been exempted ever since my arrival in this country could have made me an enemy to it (which it by no means has done) was it not in my power to have written in your newspapers, or to have published political pamphlets, either anonymously, or otherwise, as I should have thought most prudent, and by that means have done as much mischief as if I had been naturalized?

Where, then, is the wisdom of these measures, which prevent the coming of valuable emigrants, such as you wish to receive, and do not take from those that you dislike their power of injuring you? To make these measures of any real use to those who are advocates for them, they ought to have been carried farther. Aliens should not have been allowed the use of pen, ink and paper; or whatever they wrote, should have been subject to the inspection of the officers of government. They should also have seen no company but in the presence of the same officers. This being understood, the end would be effectually gained, by the voluntary retreat of all the aliens in the country, and the
effectual

effectual prevention of the arrival of any more. The half measures you now take are calculated to do you more harm than good.

What you see of Englishmen in this place, you may take for granted is equally true of those that are settled in other parts of the continent. The generality of them only wish to be quiet; and if they were otherwise disposed, they are in no degree formidable, and the country derives advantage from their capital and their example, especially that of the English farmers; and such men are of the greatest importance in this agricultural country.

But to find in America the same maxims of government, and the same proceedings, from which many of us fled from Europe, and to be reproached as disturbers of government *there*, and chiefly because we did what the court of England will never forgive in favour of liberty here, is, we own, a great disappointment to us, especially as we cannot now return. Had Dr. Price himself, the great friend of American liberty in England, or Dr. Wren, with both of whom I zealously acted in behalf of your prisoners, who must otherwise have starved, and in every other way in which we could safely serve your cause, because we thought it the cause of *liberty and justice*, against *tyranny and oppression*; I say, had either of these zealous, and active, and certainly, disinterested, friends of America been now living, they would not have been more welcome here than myself; and they would have held up their hands with astonishment to see many of the old Tories, the avowed enemies of your revolution, in greater favour than themselves. If in this you act on the christian principle of *forgiving and loving your enemies*, for which, *if they repent*, you are to be commended, you should not forget your obligations to old and steady friends.

The emigrants you wish to exclude are those who might reasonably expect to be the best received here,

as most likely to be attached to your government; because it is free from every thing that they complain of at home. Finding here no hereditary honours or powers, no church establishment, few taxes, and those laid by the representatives of the people, freely chosen, what could lead to a suspicion that persons flying from what was in all respects the reverse of this in Europe should not be the best friends to the government here?

I am, &c.

LETTER XII.

Of the Policy of America with Respect to Foreign Nations

My Friends and Neighbours,

Having taken the liberty in the preceding letters to arraign the wisdom of some of the late measures of your government with respect to your *home concerns*, I shall proceed with the same, I hope not offensive, freedom, to say what I think of your conduct towards *foreign nations*; and with respect to *them* I am of opinion that you have done what your interest required you not to have done.

While an alliance subsisted between this country and France, which had given you material assistance in asserting your independence, a treaty of *amity* as well as of commerce and navigation, should not, I think, have been made with England without the knowledge, if not the concurrence, of the French government. And this being done while those countries were in a
state

state of war, could not fail to give umbrage to France, especially as your ambassador, who negotiated the treaty, was ostensibly sent for a very different purpose, viz. to demand satisfaction for injuries received from England. In this proceeding I see nothing of the fairness and openness that I should have expected from a republican government.

The French government, however, resented this conduct more than reason and true policy required; and tho' it might be expected that, if friendship was really intended, a person supposed to be friendly to them would have been sent to negotiate with them, they had no right to reject any persons in whom this country put confidence.

The French government, also, following the example of England, was much to be blamed for their conduct to this country, and the neutral nations in general. And when your coasts were insulted, and your vessels captured almost in the mouth of your harbours, you did right, I think, to protect your property, and repel that violent aggression. But this might have been done without making it a national quarrel, by allowing the merchants to defend their property, which they would have done at no great expence; and this would have been defrayed in the best manner by an advance of the price of their goods. But to build navies, and especially to raise standing armies, on account of any apprehension you could reasonably have from France, a country so distant, and which could not have any imaginable motive for quarrelling with you, was, in my opinion, the wildest policy, and putting the country to a great expence for nothing, if not worse than nothing. For one writer on the side of your government in the Philadelphia Gazette for October 19, says that the army was intended to overaw, or suppress, the democrats. If this be true (and this writer has better means of information than I have) it is a

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declaration

declaration of war against those who disapprove the late measures.*

Tho' I honour your President for his frank and open conduct, the reverse of that of the crafty politician, which I consider as one of the most detestable of human characters, I could not approve of his unnecessary and incessant, not to say unjust, invectives against the French government. It was in my opinion, unbecoming a wise statesman, and must render a reconciliation with France (which is certainly a very desirable object) more difficult than it would otherwise be, during his presidency; unless the French directory have more temper and prudence than we can reasonably expect.

All this, you will say, is nothing more than common place party politics. But if I have nothing better, what must I say? You wish I suppose, to know
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* The writer of this remarkable paper says " Though France or Rigaud should not invade us, we have, nevertheless, all the host of internal enemies to keep down. What can do it so effectually as a good body of troops? — To keep thieves off, have a gun or a sword at your bed side To keep traitors, united Irishmen, and Frenchmen in awe, have some troops ready to repel the first invaders, to crush the first risings and seditions. An ounce of prevention is worth a tun of remedy." —

" Military force, they tell us, is sometimes abused. What power is not? Civil power certainly is. But a military force more frequently turns against its employers than it betrays or represses liberty. That is, indeed, a strong argument against using it. But remote dangers are to be disregarded when greater are imminent. Jacobins are to be kept out of the army, and militia. Government must use its best courage and vigilance."

" Plain truth, like this, is not to be expected from men in Congress, or general courts. This is no good reason why it should not be told by other honest men, nor why honest men should reject it."

my sentiments, and they are such as I have to offer on a subject which has agitated the minds of all the citizens of the United States. However, I shall now proceed to observations that are not so very trite, and indeed almost peculiar to myself.

If any country in the world was so situated as to be capable of deriving advantage from all nations, and of receiving injury from none of them, it is surely this. The native Indians being out of the question, as having no power to hurt you, all that you can have in contemplation are the several powers of Europe, generally, and especially at this time, in a state of war with each other. But as it is the interest of them all to be upon good terms with this country, it is very easy for this country to be upon good terms with them, without taking any part in their quarrels.

As this nation wants no territory belonging either to France or England, the two great rival nations of Europe, and they have no visible interest in coveting any thing belonging to this, no natural cause of hostility can exist with respect to either of them. Every possible difference must relate to commercial intercourse. But if regard to *profit and loss* be the leading principle

I, as a democrat, and an enemy to standing armies, thank the writer of this paper, and also the person who introduced the extracts from it into the *Northumberland Gazette of Nov. 9*, for this frank communication. When persons in office will not, as this writer says, speak out, and tell their whole meaning, we are obliged to their friends for doing it for them. I wish this paper may be copied into every Newspaper in the United States; as I am confident it would do more towards opening the eyes of the people with respect to the late measures of the government, than all our writing. And if this be done, there will be nothing to apprehend either from sedition laws, or standing armies. The talisman will be broken, and the castle, with all its terrific apparatus, will vanish at once.

principle in all transactions of a commercial nature, the protection of commerce can never be a justifiable cause of war; because, whatever be the issue of national hostility, the loss must far exceed the amount of all the possible gain. It is the part of wisdom, therefore, to bear a smaller loss, rather than endeavour to repair it, with the certainty of incurring a greater.

As to mere *insults*, there is more dignity in dis-
pising than in resenting them. No expression of contempt can justify a war between nations, any more than it will justify duels between individuals. In both cases alike it is the conduct of men governed by passion rather than by reason, by a principle of false honor, rather than the true one.

All the intercourse you can want with any foreign nation is, as I have observed, a commercial one; and the idea of commerce is very simple. It consists in nothing more than the exchange of one commodity for another. If any thing that you have be of less value to you than it is to a foreign nation, and any thing that they have be of more value to you than it is to them, it is for the benefit of both countries to exchange the one for the other. But the means, or the mode, in which this exchange is made is not the commerce. A third nation might be the carrier of the different commodities from the one to the other.

If the merchants of either of the two countries undertake this business, it is foreign to what is properly their own; and if, in any situation of national affairs, there be peculiar hazard in this business, those who undertake it ought to lay their account with that hazard before they engage in it, as persons who undertake any other kind of business do with respect to theirs. And whatever loss is incurred by it, it will not fall upon them, but upon their customers. For in all cases the consumer is the person who pays every expence attending

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the raising, or the transport, of the commodity that he purchases.

If any number of persons ensure the safety of ships at sea, they expect to be gainers by that undertaking, as well as the merchant by his, or the farmer by his; and the merchant will not fail to charge the price of the insurance to his customers. Is it not far better, then, to let things go on in this natural train, in which the only inconvenience is that, during this state of things, the consumer will pay a little more than usual for his commodity, than to defend this particular branch of business by involving the nation in a war?

Exclusive of all consideration of the horrors of war, to which statesmen in general give little attention, it were far better, that is, far less expensive, for the nation to pay for all the loss by a direct tax; but much better still, if the risk of loss be very great, to suspend that branch of business altogether. Others, who can do it at a less risk, will be ready enough to undertake it; and the competition of nations, and of merchants, is such, that the country will be served as well, and as cheaply, as the state of things will bear. While the sea remains open to all nations, we need not fear wanting any thing that other nations can supply us with. Allowing this to be an evil, or an undesirable state of things, it cannot be of any long continuance. After this things will return to their natural state, and the merchants may undertake the carrying trade, in addition to their proper business, as before.

But if navies must be built and manned for the sake of protecting this particular branch of business, and what is a necessary consequence, if hostilities must be engaged in first at sea, and then by land; and if ambassadors must be maintained at foreign courts, which is another consequence of the same system, for one dollar that the former system would require, this will require a thousand, to say nothing of the intricacy of foreign politics,
and

and the lives that will be lost in war. The kingdom of China acts upon the system that I wish to recommend. That country has an extensive commerce with all the world, but it employs few ships of its own, it has no resident ambassador at any foreign court, and it has no wars on account of commerce.

The merchant, or rather the carrier of merchandize from port to port, will say, that as he follows a *lawful occupation*, he ought to be protected in it. But then every other person whose occupation is lawful has the same plea for a reimbursement of his losses; for example the farmer, the manufacturer, &c. Do they not all lay their account with the accidents to which their several professions are liable, and charge their customers accordingly.

If the farmer should apply to Congress for indemnification of his losses by storms, drought, or insects, would he not be told that he knew his undertaking to be subject to all those accidents, that it was his business, and not theirs, to guard against them as well as he could, and that he might indemnify himself by the advanced prices of such products as he was able to raise? And should not the shipper of goods, and the insurers, be content with a similar answer to *their* complaints, whether of losses by pirates, privateers of other nations, &c. &c. as well as by shipwrecks. All these should be equally considered as *accidents*, to which, in a particular state of things, they knew their undertaking to be liable, as much as the farmer was apprized of the danger of bad seasons.

They might farther be told, that it would be the extreme of folly, and injustice, in the representatives of the nation, to involve it in a state of war, for the recovery of any sum they could have lost by the certain expenditure of a hundred times as much, besides hazarding the safety of the whole state.

A nation conducting its affairs on these maxims,
defending

defending its territory by a well disciplined militia, remonstrating against injuries from other nations, but never revenging them, and withal acting justly and generously on all occasions, could not fail to be respected, and would not be subject to many insults. It would insure the invaluable blessing of *peace*. It would employ its hands, and its capital, in the improvement of the country, in making bridges, roads, and navigable canals, in encouraging science, agriculture, and manufactures. It would contract no debts, and have occasion for few taxes; and therefore could not fail to flourish more than any country has ever yet done.

When I once took the liberty to throw out these hints to the President, to whom they were not new, he quoted the authority of some person which I do not recollect, who said that "a nation that could act on such maxims would command the world!" I doubt not it soon would; and there is a nation now under the discipline of providence destined for this great purpose. It is to govern the world in peace, when *nation will no more rise up against nation, and when they will learn war no more*. This happy state of things is distinctly announced in the prophecies of scripture, so that no christian can have any doubt with respect to it; and the present appearance of things in the old world is such as leads me to expect that it will take place at no very great distance of time. It is, however, according to the same prophecies, to be preceded by a season of uncommon calamity such as *there never was since there was a nation* (Dan xii, 1) and especially by the destruction of men in war, which we now see abundantly verified, but the final issue is to be most glorious and happy. It will be what is in the prophecies called the *kingdom of heaven*, a state of *righteousness and peace*. With respect to this, I said some years ago, what I shall repeat, and conclude with now. "May this kingdom of God, and of Christ, that which I conceive
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“ to be intended in the Lord’s prayer, fully come, tho’
“ all the kingdoms of the world be removed to make
“ way for it.”

Hoping to have no occasion to trouble you with
any more Letters of this kind, I am, with my wishes
and prayers for your temporal and eternal welfare,

My Friends and Neighbours,

Yours sincerely,

J. PRIESTLEY.

P. S. Finding that it is generally reported among
those who call themselves *Federalists*, that Mr. Cooper
writes as prompted, or supported, by me, I think
it right to observe, that they who believe this know nothing
of Mr. Cooper, or of me. Every thing that he
has written has been wholly independent of me. He
is not a man that requires to be prompted, or supported,
by any person. Tho’ I was frequently in his company
during the publication of his *Essays*, I never saw
one of them, nor do I distinctly recollect even hearing
him mention the subject of any of them, before their
publication.

Maxims

M A X I M S
O F
POLITICAL ARITHMETIC,

APPLIED TO THE CASE OF THE
UNITED STATES of AMERICA.

*First published in the AURORA for FEBRUARY 26
and 27, 1798.**

(By a QUAKER in Politics.)

AN idea of the true interests of any country is perhaps most easily formed by supposing it to be the property of one person, who would naturally wish to derive the greatest advantage from it, and who would therefore, lay out his capital in such a manner as to make it the most productive to him. An attention to separate and discordant interests of different classes of men, is apt to distract the mind: but when all the people are considered as members of one family, who can be disposed of, and employed, as the head of it shall direct, for the common benefit, that cause of embarrassment is removed.

To derive the greatest advantage from any country it will be necessary that attention be paid, in the
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* Some of the leading sentiments in this paper are the same with those in the preceding *Letters*: but they could not well be left out, and I think them of sufficient importance to be repeated.

first place, to the wants of nature, and to raise from it, in the greatest quantity and perfection, such productions as are necessary to feed and clothe the inhabitants, and to provide them with habitations, in order to guard them against the inclemency of the weather, and after this such as are of use to their more comfortable accommodation, and the supply of artificial wants.

If any country be completely insulated, or cut off from all communication with other countries, it will be necessary to raise all those articles within itself; but when a communication is opened with other countries, the proprietor will do well to give his whole attention to those productions which his own country can best yield, and exchange the surplus for such articles as other countries can better supply him with. For by that means, his labour will be employed to the most advantage. If, for example, it would employ him a month to go thro' all the processes which are necessary to make a piece of cloth, when the effect of the labour of a week in his husbandry would enable him to purchase that cloth, it will be better for him to confine himself to his husbandry, and buy his cloth; besides that, not making it his sole business, he would not, with any labour, make it so well. And now that a communication by sea with all parts of the world is so well established, that it may be depended upon that whatever any country wants another can supply it with, to the advantage of both, this exchange may be made with little interruption, even by war.

Commerce consists in the exchange of the commodities of one country for those of another; and as this, like any other business, will be performed to the most advantage by persons who give their whole attention to it, and who are called *Merchants*, it will be most convenient, in general, that this be done by them, rather than by those who employ themselves in raising the produce. The business of conveying the produce of
one

one country to another is a different thing from merchandize. Those who employ ships for this purpose, are paid for their trouble by the freight of their vessels, while the merchant subsists from what he gains by the exchange of commodities.

What is generally termed *active commerce* is that which is carried on by the natives of any country, in ships of their own, conveying their produce to other countries, and bringing back theirs in return; and that is called *passive commerce* which is carried on at home, people of other countries bringing their commodities, and taking back what they want in exchange for them. The quantity of proper commerce, or merchandize, is the same in both these cases. All the difference consists in the employment given to the carriers, and the shipping of the different countries.

While the communication with other countries by sea is open, it cannot be for the interest of any country, either to impose duties on goods brought into it, or to give bounties on those that are exported; because, by both these means, the people are made to pay more than they otherwise would do for the same benefit. In both cases the price of the goods must be advanced. He who pays the duty will be refunded at least, by the persons who purchase the commodity, and the bounty to the vender must be paid by a tax on all the inhabitants.

It is, no doubt, the interest of any particular class of persons to extend their business, and thereby increase their gains. But if their fellow citizens pay more in the advanced price of what they purchase than their gain amounts to, the community is a loser; and if it be equal, one class is made to contribute to the maintenance of another, when all have an equal natural right to the fruits of their own labour.

For the same reason, if, on any account, the conveyance of goods from one country to another be attended

tended with more loss than gain, the person in whose hands was the property of the whole would discontinue that branch of business, and employ his capital in some other way, or rather let it remain unproductive than employ it to a certain loss.

These maxims appear to me to be incontrovertible in the abstract. What, then, may be learnt from them with respect to this country, situated as it now is?

Without enquiring into the cause, which is no part of my object, it is a fact, that the conveyance of goods, or the carrying trade of this country, which has generally been taken up by the merchants, though it is no necessary branch of their business, is peculiarly hazardous, and of course, expensive. This expence the country at large must pay, in the advanced price of the goods purchased. In this state of things they have also found it necessary to send ambassadors to distant countries, in order to remove the supposed cause of the difficulty, which is attended with another expence. It has likewise been thought necessary to build ships of war for the purpose of protecting this carrying trade; and if this be done to any effect, it must be attended with much more expence.

I do not pretend to be able to calculate the expence occasioned by any of these circumstances; but the amount of all three, viz. the additional price to the carrier to indemnify him for his risque, the expence of ambassadors, and that of fitting out ships of war; I cannot help thinking must be much more than all the profit that can be derived from the carrying trade; and if so, a person who had the absolute command of all the shipping, and all the capital of the country, would see it to be his interest to lay up his ships for the present, and make some other use of his capital. And as the greatest part of the country is as yet uncleared, and there is a great want of roads, bridges and
canals,

canals, the use of which would sufficiently repay him for any sums laid out upon them, and they would not fail to contribute to the improvement of the country, which I suppose to be his estate, he would naturally lay out his superfluous capital on these great objects. The expence of building one man of war would suffice to make a bridge over a river of a considerable extent, and (which ought to be a serious consideration) the morals of labourers are much better preserved than those of seamen; and especially those of soldiers.

Another great advantage attending this conduct is, that the country would be in no danger of quarrelling with any of its neighbours, and thereby the hazard of war, which is necessarily attended with incalculable evils, physical and moral, would be avoided. To make this case easier to myself, I would consider injuries done by other nations, in the same light as losses by hurricanes or earthquakes: and without indulging any resentment, I would repair the damage as well as I could. I would not be angry where anger could answer no good end. If one nation affront another, the people would do best to take it patiently, and content themselves with making remonstrances. There is the truest dignity in this conduct; and unprovoked injuries would not often be repeated, as the injurious nation would soon find that it gained neither credit nor advantage by such behaviour.

This is the case with independent individuals, and why should it be otherwise with independent nations? Rash and hasty men, standing on what they fancy to be *honour*, are ever quarrelling, and doing themselves, as well as others, infinitely more mischief than could possibly arise from behaving with christian meekness and forbearance. In fact, they act like children, who have no command of their passions, and not like men, governed by reason. In this calculation, peace of mind, which is preserved by the meek, and lost by the quarrelsome, is a very important article.

It

It will be said, that merchants, having no other occupation than that of sending goods to foreign countries, by which their own is benefited, have a *right* to the protection of their country. But what is the *rule of right* in this, or any other case? It must be regulated by a regard to the good of the whole; and if the country receive more injury than benefit by any branch of business, it ought to be discontinued; and those who engage in any business, should lay their account with the risque to which it is exposed, as much as the farmer with the risque of bad seasons, for which his country makes him no indemnification, though his employment is as beneficial to it as that of the merchant.

If, therefore, in these circumstances of extraordinary hazard, any person will send his goods to sea, it should be at his own risque; and the country, which receives more injury than advantage from it, and whose peace is endangered by it, should not indemnify him for any loss. Let him, however, be fully apprized of this; and if he will persist in doing as he has done, the consequence is to himself, and his country is not implicated in it.

This is a country which wants nothing but *peace*, and an attention to its natural advantages, to make it most flourishing and respectable; and wanting the manufactures of other countries, its friendship will be courted by them all, on account of the advantage they will derive from an intercourse with it. Other countries being fully peopled, the inhabitants *must* apply to manufactures; and where can they find such a market as this must necessarily be? And on account of the rivalry and competition which there will be among them, the people of this country cannot fail to be served in the cheapest manner by them all. This will be independent of all their politics, with which this country has nothing to do. But, if by endeavouring to rival any of them in naval power (which will only resemble the
frog

frog in the fable endeavouring to swell itself to the size of the ox) it excites their jealousy, and this country should join any one of them against any other, it will certainly not only lose the advantage it might derive from the trade of that country, but pay dearly for its folly, by the evils of a state of warfare.

What seems to be more particularly impolitic in this country, as ill suiting the state of it, is the duty on the importation of *books*, which are so much wanted, and which even great encouragement could not produce here. Is it at all probable that such works as the Greek and Latin classics, those of the christian Fathers, the Polyglott Bible, the Philosophical Transactions, or the Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences, &c. &c. will, in the time of our great grand children be printed in the United States? and yet there is a heavy duty on their importation; and for every printer, or maker of paper for printing, there are, no doubt, several thousand purchasers of books, all of whom are taxed for their advantage. In these circumstances, it were surely better to have more cultivators of the ground, and fewer printers.

When I see at what expence ambassadors are sent to foreign and distant countries, with which this country has little or no intercourse; and when it is very problematical whether in any case, they have not done more harm than good, and think what solid advantage, might be derived from half the expence in sending out men of science for the purpose of purchasing works of literature and philosophical instruments, of which all the universities and colleges of this country are most disgracefully destitute; and that the expence of one of the three frigates would have supplied all of them with telescopes equal to that of Dr. Herschell, and other philosophical instruments in the same great style, to the immortal honour of any administration, I lament that the progress of national wisdom should be so slow, and

and that our country profits so little by the experience and the folly of others. The Chinese never had resident ambassadors in any country, and what country has flourished more than China?

A foreigner travelling in the interior part of this country, and finding the want of roads, bridges and inns, wonders that things of such manifest utility should not have had more attention paid to them, when he sees that great sums are raised and expended on objects, the use of which is at best very doubtful. And men of letters coming to reside here, find their hands tied up. Books of literature are not to be had, and philosophical instruments can neither be made nor purchased. Every thing of the kind must be had from Europe, and pay a duty on importation.

But all this may be short sighted speculation; and it may be, nay I doubt not it is, better for the world at large, that its progress should not be so rapid; that a long state of infancy, childhood and folly, should precede that of manhood and true wisdom; and that vices, which will spring up in all countries, are better checked by the calamities of war than by reason and philosophy.

It may be the wise plan of Providence, by means of the folly of man, to involve this country in the vortex of European politics, and the misery of European wars; and to prevent the importation of the means of knowledge till a better use would be made of them. Nations make slower advances in wisdom than individual men, in some proportion to their longer duration. But what they acquire at a greater expence, they retain better; so that, I doubt not, there is much wisdom in that part of the general constitution of things.

A stranger is apt to wonder that political animosity should have got to so great a height in this country, when all were so lately united in their contest with a common enemy; and that their enmity, which cannot
be

be of long standing, should be as inveterate as in the oldest countries, where parties have subsisted time immemorial. But it may be the design of Providence, by this means, to divide this widely extended country into smaller States, which shall be at war with each other, that by their common sufferings their common vices may be corrected, and thus lay a foundation for the solid acquisition of wisdom ; which will be more valued in consequence of having been more dearly bought, in some future age.

Divided as the people of this country are, some in favour of France, and others of England, I should not much wonder, if the decision of the government in favour of either of them should be the cause of a civil war. But even this, the most calamitous of all events, would promote a greater agitation of men's minds, and be a more effectual check to the progress of luxury, vice, and folly, than any other mode of discipline, and at the same time that it will evince the folly of man, may display the wisdom of Him that *ruleth in the kingdoms of men*, and who appoints for all nations such governments, and such governors, as their state, and that of other countries connected with them, really requires: Pharaoh occupied as important a station in the plan of Divine Providence, as king David, though called *a man after God's own heart*. For his wise and excellent purposes, one was as necessary as the other.

Many lives, no doubt, will be lost in war, civil or foreign ; but men must die ; and if the destruction of one generation be the means of producing another which shall be wiser and better, the good will exceed the evil, great as it may be, and greatly to be deplored as all evils ought to be.

A stranger naturally expects to find a greater simplicity of manners, and more virtue, in this *new country*, as it is called, than in the old ones. But a nearer acquaintance with it, will convince him, that consider-
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ing how easily subsistence is procured here, and consequently how few incitements there are to the vices of the lower classes especially, there is less virtue as well as less knowledge, than in most of the countries of Europe. In many parts of the United States there is also less religion, at least of a rational and useful kind. And where there is no sense of religion, no fear of God, or respect to a future state, there will be no good morals that can be depended upon. Laws may restrain the excesses of vice, but they cannot impart the principles of virtue.

Infidelity has made great progress in France, through all the continent of Europe, and also in England; but I much question whether it be not as great in America; and the want of information in the people at large, makes thousands of them the dupes of such shallow writings as those of Mr. Paine, and the French unbelievers, several of which are translated and published here, and either through want of knowledge, or of zeal, little or nothing is done by the friends of Revelation, to stop the baneful torrent.

All this, however, I doubt not, will appear to have been ultimately for the best. Let temperate and wise men forwarn the country of its danger, and, as they are in duty bound, endeavour to prevent, or alleviate, evils of every kind. Their conduct will meet the approbation of the great Governor of the universe; and, in all events, He, whose will no foreign power can control, being the true and benevolent parent of all the human race, will provide for the happiness of his offspring in the most effectual manner, though, to our imperfect understanding, the steps which lead to it be incomprehensible. We must not do evil that good may come, because our understanding is finite, and therefore we cannot be sure that the good we intend will come. But the Divine Being, whose foresight is unerring, continually acts upon that maxim, and, as we see, to the greatest advantage.

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